

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-6 are pending. By this Amendment, a substitute Abstract of the Disclosure is added, claim 1 is amended and claims 3-6 are added. Reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The amendments and new claims are supported at least by Figs. 2A-2C, and by the specification at least at pages 13 and 14.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-2 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,180,261 to Inoue et al. ("Inoue"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

According to the Inoue disclosure, imidating occurs before any circuit layers are formed on a polyimide precursor layer. Thus, the circuit layers are not formed on the precursor layer; rather, they are formed on the insulating layer that has been formed from the precursor layer.

According to the pending claims, imidating occurs after forming an upper circuit layer on a polyimide precursor layer. As an example, as shown in Figs. 2A-2C, an upper circuit layer 23 is formed on a precursor layer 22, and then the precursor layer is imidated, thereby becoming a polyimide insulating layer 22a (Fig. 2C).

This concept is claimed variously in independent claims 1, 3 and 5. Claim 1 recites imidation of a partially exposed polyimide precursor layer. Please see the description at page 14, lines 3-8 of the specification. Claim 3 recites that imidation occurs while the polyimide precursor layer includes the upper circuit layer. Claim 5 recites that the imidation occurs after the step in which the upper circuit layer is formed.

An advantage of leaving the polyimide precursor layer partially exposed and imidating the partially exposed polyimide precursor layer is clear from, e.g., page 14, lines 3-8 of the specification. Specifically, during imidation of the polyimide precursor, water is generated by a dehydration reaction in the polyimide insulating layer 22a. However, this moisture can be

evaporated off because a patterned upper circuit layer 23 has been formed on the polyimide insulating layer 22a, partially exposing the polyimide insulating layer 22a.

Each of the claims is clearly distinct from Inoue, in which no circuit is formed until after imidation has occurred.

For at least this reason, claims 1, 3 and 5, and the claims depending therefrom, are patentably distinct from the applied prior art. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

Petition for Extension of Time  
Substitute Abstract of the Disclosure

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